DP

UNITED
NATIONS

Governing Council
of the
United Nations
Development Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/1993/32
1 April 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fortieth session
1 - 18 June 1993, New York
Item 5 of the provisional agenda
UNFPA

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

Progress report on UNFPA successor support cost arrangements

SUMMARY

This document has been prepared in response to Governing Council decision 92/32A, paragraph 13, which requested the Executive Director to submit a progress report on the implementation of the technical support services teams, including identification of problems and constraints as well as recommendations for improving implementation. The introduction outlines the broad purposes of the teams and the overall strategy for making technical assistance in population more available to the countries being served. Part I details the status, as of March 1993, of the distribution of advisers and agency specialists by fields of technical competence, sector, geographic location, gender and nationality; it also discusses the steps taken to implement the Council's recommendation to reflect the importance of maternal and child health/family planning (MCH/FP) in the selection of team members. Part II covers achievements and the problems and constraints that have been experienced. Part III sets forth proposals for improving implementation. Part IV contains a concluding paragraph. Part V presents recommendations.

/...

93-19343 (E) 060493 07/05/93

INTRODUCTION

1. At its thirty-ninth session in 1992, the Governing Council reviewed the "Progress report on UNFPA successor support cost arrangements" (DP/1992/30). That document covered the number, fields of technical competence and location of the teams being used to provide technical support services. It also outlined the teams' functions, reporting and working relationships, and monitoring mechanisms. This report responds to the request in the Governing Council's decision 92/32A, paragraph 13, that UNFPA provide the fortieth session of the Governing Council with "a progress report on the implementation of the technical support services teams, including identification of problems and constraints as well as recommendations for improving implementation".

2. The basic purposes of these successor support cost arrangements are to provide effective and timely support for population programmes and policies in developing countries, to enhance and maximize the use of national and regional capacities in population activities, to use the most appropriate and competitive sources of technical assistance, to bring technical services and advice closer to field-level activities, to help Governments assume the management of UNFPA-funded programmes and projects, and to continue the practice of cost-sharing between UNFPA and agencies of the United Nations system participating in the new successor arrangements (Governing Council decision 91/37, para. 1). The Governing Council endorsed "the principle of the team approach . . . in assisting [the Fund's] representatives/country directors . . . in the provision, coordination and management of technical advisory services and backstopping" (decision 91/37, para. 3).

3. The design of these successor arrangements takes fully into account the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/211, which urges "utilization of national capacity through government/national execution of projects, a more programme oriented approach and regular and timely provision of technical advice and backstopping by agencies at the country level" (para. 25). The new arrangements are also consonant with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 47/199, which "stresses the need for an overall improvement of the effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations development system in delivering its assistance" (para. 5), "the need for the United Nations system to strengthen its capacity to provide policy and technical support and advice at the request of recipient countries" (para. 17), and "the urgent need for the United Nations system to give increased priority to assisting recipient countries in building and/or enhancing the necessary capacity to undertake national execution, including the provision of support services, as required, at the field level" (para. 18.). This resolution "emphasizes that an effectively functioning resident coordinator system will be dependent on a number of factors". Among these factors, "the separate funds, programmes and specialized agencies must make a commitment to work together to integrate assistance provided by the United Nations system into the development process of the recipient countries in a fully coordinated manner" (para. 38 (a)).

4. In addition to summarizing progress in implementation, this report addresses other elements in the Governing Council's decision 92/32, in which it "urges the Executive Director to ensure that the technical support services teams are established with clear lines of accountability, management structures, reporting and working relationships; requests the Executive Director, bearing in mind the United Nations Population Fund's multisectoral mandate, to appropriately reflect the importance of the area of maternal and child health and family planning in her selection of the team members' fields of technical competence; [and] emphasizes the importance of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of United Nations Population Fund executing agencies in the delivery of technical assistance services".

5. Part I of this report describes the status of the teams as of March 1993. It examines the distribution of advisers and agency specialists by their fields of technical competence, by sector and location, and by gender and nationality. It also looks at the management structures and reporting and working relationships that are being put in place. Finally, it examines the steps taken to ensure that maternal and child health and family planning are given appropriate emphasis in the selection of team members. Part II examines the achievements of the teams and notes the problems and constraints that have been encountered in implementation. Part III deals with proposals for improving implementation. Part IV contains a concluding paragraph. Part V presents recommendations.

I. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUCCESSOR SUPPORT-COST ARRANGEMENTS

A. Distribution of advisers and agency specialists

Distribution by region and field of competence

6. As approved by the 1992 Governing Council, the TSS arrangement is envisaged to include a total of 164 experts to be in place by the fourth year of implementation (see table 1). As of January 1992, 57 incumbents had been engaged for the following TSS positions: 39 country support team (CST) members and 18 agency headquarters specialists and coordinators (see table 2, note).[1] As of 3 March 1993, 99 out of 133 TSS posts due to be filled in 1992 were encumbered: 73 at CST offices and 26 at headquarters (see table 3).[2] In addition, candidates for 13 CST posts have been cleared by the Inter-Agency Task Force and are under recruitment. By the end of 1993, 150 TSS posts are expected to be occupied. The 73 encumbered posts are out of a total of 120 CST posts envisaged for a fully operational TSS system; the 26 encumbered headquarters posts are out of a total of 44 headquarters posts envisaged for the fully operational system.[3]

7. In Africa, a total of 35 out of 42 CST posts due to be filled by the end of 1992 were encumbered by 3 March 1993 (see table 3). The CST for Africa I in Dakar became operational during July-September 1992. As of 3 March 1993, 12 out of 16 posts due to be filled in 1992 were encumbered. In the CST for Africa II in Addis Ababa, 11 out of 13 advisers were operating during the same period under the supervision of an acting team leader. In the CST for Africa III in Harare, which started operations in January 1993, 11 out of 12 posts which should have been filled were encumbered by 3 March 1993. When the TSS arrangement becomes fully operational in 1995, there will be 53 CST advisers in the region.

8. The CST for the Arab States, based in Amman, became operational in October 1992. By 3 March 1993, 7 out of 15 CST posts due to be filled in 1992 posts were occupied (see table 3). A fully functioning team of 17 CST advisers is expected to be in place by the end of 1993.

---

[1]These figures do not include the 36 United Nations positions under discussion at that time.

[2]For planned regional and sectoral distribution of TSS professionals when fully operational in 1995, see table 4.

[3]For distribution of countries covered by each CST, see table 5, Parts 1-3.

9. In Asia and the Pacific, a total of 20 out of 33 CST posts due to be filled in 1992 were encumbered by 3 March 1993 (see table 3). Two teams became operational during July-September 1992. In the CST for East and South-East Asia, based in Bangkok, 9 out of 13 posts were filled by 1 March 1993; in the CST for South and West Asia, located in Kathmandu, 9 out of 13 posts due to be filled in 1992 were occupied by that date. With 4 out of 8 CST posts encumbered, the CST for the Pacific, based in Suva, will become operational when the team leader assumes his post in April 1993. When the TSS arrangement becomes fully operational, there will be 38 CST advisers in the region.

10. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the CST based in Santiago started operations in July 1992. As of 3 March 1993, the team was almost fully operational, with 11 out of 12 CST posts encumbered. Recruitment for the remaining vacancy is expected to be completed during the second quarter of 1993 (see table 3).

11. The distribution of the 73 CST advisers by fields of competence was as follows: 16 in basic data collection; 11 in population policy and development planning; 14 in maternal and child health/family planning (MCH/FP); 24 in information, education and communication (IEC); 1 in women, population and development, and 7 in other areas, including team leaders (see table 3).

12. The distribution of the 26 specialists and coordinators was as follows: 6 in basic data collection; 5 in population policy and development planning; 5 in MCH/FP; 7 in IEC; 2 in women, population and development; and 1 in other areas (see table 3).

Distribution by gender and nationality

13. By gender, the distribution of CST advisers was 60 males and 13 females (see table 6). Of the 7 team leaders appointed, 3 were females. At agency headquarters level, the gender distribution was as follows: 21 male and 5 female incumbents (see table 6).

14. In terms of nationality, CST advisers and specialists/coordinators were recruited from both donor and recipient countries. The distribution by region was as follows: 27 from Africa (sub-Saharan); 12 from the Arab States; 27 from Asia and the Pacific; 12 from Latin America and the Caribbean; 14 from Europe; and 7 from North America (see table 7, parts 1-3).

B. The need for improved distribution in fields of technical competence

15. The distribution of technical competence as originally planned (see table 1) was based on a 1989-1990 assessment of regional advisory posts. Historically, the distribution of regional advisers supported by UNFPA has been shaped by the relevant capacities of United Nations agencies -- especially the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the United Nations and its Regional Commissions -- which the Fund utilized to provide technical assistance particularly in the case of IEC, basic data collection and demographic analysis. Thus on the basis of previous experience, the TSS arrangements assigned 35 and 27 per cent of TSS professionals to such programme areas as basic data collection, population policy formulation and evaluation as well as IEC although UNFPA programme expenditures in these sectors were approximately 25 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively. In addition, although UNFPA spent approximately 50 per cent of its programme resources in the MCH/FP sector, only 23 per cent of TSS professionals were in this category. In her opening statement to the June 1992 Inter-Agency

Task Force (IATF) meeting, the Executive Director brought to the attention of the Task Force the May 1992 Governing Council's concern that the TSS arrangements should reflect the importance of MCH/FP in the selection of team members. The Executive Director requested the Task Force to take this into consideration in making the necessary adjustments and possibly postponing recruitment of some advisers other than those in MCH/FP.

16. Delay in the actual establishment of the CST offices as well as in the transfer of incumbents to CST sites has made it difficult to assess performance within the team framework. This has also meant a postponement, to the end of 1993, of an examination of how well the distribution fits actual needs and experience. However, in response to the Governing Council's instructions and also in view of the reduced budget for 1992 (see para. 59), the IATF recommended the postponement of recruitment, or a review of the need, for at least four IEC CST posts, one IEC specialist's post, as well as three coordinators' posts at the United Nations -- one at United Nations headquarters, one at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and one at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). In addition, delay in the recruitment for some CST posts in the population and development planning sector (two in Asia, two in Africa and one in the Arab States) may result in the review of the necessity for such posts where few or no requests for such technical backstopping services have so far been identified. UNFPA will recommend to the Task Force that these posts be converted to MCH/FP posts as required.

17. The evaluation planned for the end of 1993 is expected to make recommendations on the distribution of technical competence within and across teams as well on the number of the TSS experts in all the regions and at agency headquarters. The proposed distribution of TSS professionals as shown in Table 4 is offered as a step towards increasing the number of MCH/FP advisers. Recruitment for 4 MCH/FP posts planned for 1994 may also be advanced to 1993. Depending on the results of the 1993 evaluation, 8 CST posts outside the MCH/FP category as well as 1 headquarters post, which are to be filled in 1994, may be converted to MCH/FP, increasing the number of advisers in this category from 37 (23 per cent as approved in 1992) to between 41 (25 per cent) and 50 (30 per cent). The 1995 in-depth evaluation would further provide major recommendations on the structure of the whole TSS arrangement.

C. Technical support services orientation programme

18. Following IATF recommendations on the importance of conducting orientation workshops on the new TSS arrangements, a five-tier orientation programme was designed for team leaders, agency headquarters' specialists and coordinators, CST members, and UNFPA field office staff as well as for sector advisers in the form of substantive technical workshops. In preparation for the establishment of the teams, six team leaders were given extensive orientation at UNFPA headquarters in March 1992. Subsequently, they also had comprehensive discussions with concerned staff at the United Nations in New York and the headquarters of UNESCO (Paris), FAO (Rome), the ILO (Geneva) and the World Health Organization (WHO) (Geneva).

19. In January 1993, orientation workshops were completed for the CST for Latin America and the Caribbean in Santiago, Chile, and for the three CSTs for Asia and the Pacific region in Pattaya, Thailand. In total, 33 CST members attended these workshops. Similar workshops are planned for the three Africa teams in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in March 1993 and for the CST for Arab States and Europe in Amman, Jordan, in May 1993. The aim of these workshops is to create a common understanding of the objectives of the TSS arrangements within the context of UNFPA's mandate, policies and priorities. UNFPA's mandate, which is to build the capacity of countries to respond to changing population needs, should be the basis for CSTs' work. In the course of their work, CSTs are expected to develop innovative strategies in response to

new requirements in the population field. During the January 1993 workshops, frank and open discussions of various substantive as well as administrative and procedural issues led to a number of recommendations which have been incorporated in section III. There is considerable interest among CST advisers in the proposed substantive workshops on technical issues, which would have to be organized with partner agencies (see para. 27).

II. ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS

20. This section examines the progress of the CSTs in meeting five key objectives of the new technical support services approach. These five objectives are to improve the availability to countries of population-related technical knowledge, analysis and research; to foster an integrated and coordinated approach to the provision of that knowledge; to improve the quality of population programmes through better monitoring and evaluation; to enhance accountability; and to accelerate the achievement of national self-reliance in the development of individual and institutional expertise. The section then examines constraints and problems in implementing the new approach.

A. ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Availability of population-related technical knowledge

21. One of the most important purposes of the new arrangement is to ensure that countries will be able to draw upon technical knowledge, in timely and effective fashion, through the CSTs. Based on requests and consultation with government counterparts and agency representatives, the UNFPA Representative/UNFPA Country Director prepares a plan specifying the nature and source of technical population-related knowledge that the country needs. This plan -- called the technical backstopping plan (TBP) -- is the foundation for the team's work plan. The team's work plan, which is prepared annually and revised quarterly, shows all the major activities to be undertaken by each team member. It also includes activities in response to requests for technical support services from UNFPA and agency headquarters as well as from its respective field representatives.

22. To date, in the regions in which teams have been functioning for some months -- namely, Africa (Dakar and Addis Ababa), the Arab States, East and South-east Asia, South and West Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, team members are already responding to the TBPs, some of which are quite detailed. Team members have conducted technical backstopping missions to 23 countries; one team has already participated in a Programme Review and Strategy Development (PRSD) exercise; and five have participated in tripartite project reviews. A major activity has been the review of country project proposals based on the programme approach. (See tables 8, 9 and 10.) TBPs for some countries are still being prepared and some are being refined and elaborated.

23. Several teams have undertaken to produce newsletters on their activities, an endeavour initiated by the team in South and West Asia, which published its first newsletter in March 1993. Newsletters would help communicate fully what kinds of skills are available through the team, promoting greater understanding of the functioning of the teams. Moreover, the circulation of a newsletter from one team to another would help speed awareness of common problems and possible solutions. In addition, newsletters could expand awareness of possibilities for technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC).

2. Integrated and coordinated approach

Building a team

24. One of the strengths of the team approach is the ability of advisers representing different sectors and expertise, working as a team, to integrate their expertise so that a country can benefit from coordinated assistance. The integrated approach to technical assistance is facilitated by focusing on the national population programme to identify specific backstopping requirements in the various sectors of activity and treating them in a comprehensive response. In addition, through the process of cross-fertilization, team members would simultaneously broaden the skills and understanding that they could apply to meeting country needs. The early experience shows that working side by side with other experts on the same problem is strengthening the collective expertise that can be brought to providing countries with technical assistance. Moreover, team members are participating in these responses to country needs regardless of whether their agencies are participating in a project in the particular country. The team approach also allows for more comprehensive and more timely responses to countries' requests since the teams' work plans are prepared in advance, in conjunction with total needs foreseen for a year. However, close attention will be needed to the potential for bottlenecks, because of last-minute changes in timing and because, at some point, the same advisers may be needed by different countries at the same time.

25. Team building is proceeding rapidly. In Dakar, the team leader organized a seminar for team members, with presentations by each member on his or her specialization. The team leader in Harare, appointed on 1 January 1993, adopted a similar procedure. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the team meets weekly to discuss requests for technical assistance, the coordination of work plans, and relations with agencies as well as administrative matters. The team leaders for East and South-east Asia as well as for South and West Asia note that the process of reviewing country project proposals within the context of the programme approach has been used as a vehicle for developing a genuine team dynamism. On each major project proposal, three to five team members are assigned to give detailed comments and suggestions. The team leader for Latin America and the Caribbean notes that working in a team has proved an outstanding mechanism for coordination and exchange of knowledge.

26. Even at this early stage of implementation, there is evidence that timeliness and quality are the main factors in the success of the teams. Some UNFPA Country Directors have already remarked on the promptness of the teams in responding to needs and on the quality of their assistance. For example, the team approach was used in providing technical assistance for developing the UNFPA population programme in Viet Nam, with six advisers visiting Hanoi in January 1993. As a result, eight project documents were developed in such areas as population and development planning, census data use and data processing, development of social indicators, MCH/FP management information system and IEC activities. Many of the projects are expected to be operational soon. Within the framework of a programme approach, the country gained high quality multidisciplinary technical inputs through the team. Joint missions are not new. However, under the new arrangements, advisers work together before, during and after the missions, and they do not confine themselves to the interests and projects of their agencies. Rather, they employ a programme approach in apportioning tasks to ensure the highest quality assistance.

Integrating multiple sectors into the work of country support teams

27. To ensure that the teams' work reflect the integration of multiple sectors and a comprehensive programme approach, UNFPA arranged several orientations of team leaders, both at UNFPA headquarters

and at the agencies, as well as of CST members at the team sites. Two other orientation workshops for CST advisers are planned for spring 1993 (see para. 19). These workshops are intended to strengthen the teams' ability to coordinate different sectors and specializations based on the programme approach, and to avoid duplication of effort. One of the challenges for technical assistance activities is how to disseminate research findings to the field in ways that are useful in operational activities. UNFPA headquarters has attempted to tackle this problem as part of its orientation of team leaders, to clarify how this can be done. The substantive workshops for selected team members planned for 1993 should also advance the incorporation of research into operational activities. These workshops will be held in Geneva for WHO and the ILO together, and in Rome or Paris for FAO and UNESCO together. Participants will be selected according to the content of the workshops.

28. One indicator of the extent of integration of multiple sectors into the teams' work plans is the undertaking of joint missions to countries, with the participation of two or more team members. As table 9 shows, joint missions have already been undertaken to Bangladesh, Chad, China, Mali, the Philippines and Viet Nam.

Linking work plan of agency headquarters specialists to work plans of country support teams

29. There is still work to be done to ensure the appropriate development of the work plans of the agency headquarters specialists and coordinators. Although the agency's work plan is not necessarily dependent on the team's work plan, the plans are linked. The agencies should continually be providing technical information and training, which will be integrated into the teams' functioning. The teams' work plans, reflecting country needs as they do, will be one of several elements to be considered in decisions about the nature and content of the agencies' work plans.

30. Provision of technical backstopping by headquarters specialists to the teams has not followed the pace of the establishment of the teams. Some work plans have indicated that training materials and working papers are being prepared. The ILO distributed briefing kits on IEC matters; on population, human resources and development, including migration and population distribution; as well as on women, population and development, which were found extremely useful. It has been recommended to the IATF that similar kits be prepared by other agencies with state-of-the-art papers on their sectors.

3. Improving the quality of population programmes through better monitoring and evaluation

31. The core of UNFPA's programme approach is the PRSD process. The aim of PRSD exercises is to develop a coherent, long-term strategic framework for a national population programme. They are conducted for and with the support of the Government. A major function of the CSTs is to assist countries in all stages of programming, including a review of past programmes, formulation of a national population strategy, and elaboration of country population programmes. Under the new arrangements, the CSTs are to provide the highest quality technical support and backstopping in the implementation and monitoring of these programmes as requested by the Government.

32. Steps are being taken to ensure that the services of CSTs are utilized in the whole programming process. The important role of CSTs as instruments for improved monitoring and evaluation of population programmes was discussed during regional meetings of UNFPA country directors. This was also highlighted during the orientation of team leaders and CST members. This will be stressed again during the forthcoming

CST orientation workshops as well as at every opportunity when relevant instructions are formulated and issued. Already, some team members have participated in the PRSD exercise (see para. 22). More CST participation is expected in PRSD exercises planned for 1993.

4. Enhancing accountability

33. The new arrangements are intended to enhance the accountability of the Executive Director and to ensure transparency in how advisers are recruited and used, with an emphasis on results. The challenge is to do this and to foster complementarity of activity. As noted earlier, the country support teams have a critical role in helping the Executive Director to ensure the technical quality of the programmes UNFPA supports. Thus, they are to help the UNFPA Representatives/Country Directors in monitoring the implementation of country programmes and will be required to undertake at least one monitoring visit to a country per annum for each sector in which significant investment is being made. Such a visit would normally occur during tripartite review meetings, evaluations, or mid-term country programme reviews. The obligation could also be met during PRSD exercises or project formulations if attention were given to the ongoing projects.

5. Accelerate the attainment of national self-reliance in population matters

34. One of the central purposes of the new arrangements is to help increase and accelerate each country's development of self-reliance in population matters. Doing so implies the identification and use of national expertise and institutions as the first possible source of technical capability in meeting a country's needs for assistance in population. Adequate technical backstopping plans, prepared by the UNFPA Country Director in consultation with the Government, are a primary source of information regarding available national expertise in the population field.

35. In Bangkok, the team, with the help of UNFPA Representatives/Country Directors, has begun the preparation of a roster of national and international experts who could be used as consultants. It was suggested that the team also draw upon data in the National Directories of Population Experts and Institutions prepared by the Population Information Network (POPIN) project of ESCAP. The team in Kathmandu and teams in the other regions are also planning to prepare such a roster. In addition, it is being reiterated to the UNFPA Representatives/Country Directors that their TBPs should reflect the entire range of the Government's needs for technical assistance, regardless of whether those needs can be met at the national level, by the team, by TSS staff at agency headquarters, or by international consultants, as the team may be able to help in identifying resources at all these levels. National resources would, however, have first priority.

B. Constraints and problems

1. Preparation and formulation of technical backstopping plans

36. One constraint on missions and reviews at this early stage of implementation is the quality of the TBPs. Although a few have been highly detailed, some have not, and some have yet to be prepared. Only one team had received all TBPs for 1992; the remainder of the teams were missing from 3 to 12 TBPs (see

table 10). Most have been rated moderately helpful by team leaders surveyed in January 1993 (see table 10).[4]

37. The formulation of TBPs by some UNFPA Representatives/Country Directors seems to have been delayed for a variety of reasons. There is evidence of a misperception of an increased financial constraint, since the costs for country-related technical service support are now being charged to country programme budgets. Governments may be unwilling to program part of the country programme resources for the team's services when such services are perceived to have been provided free by regional advisers under the previous arrangement. Also, in some countries, the presence of sufficient national expertise, combined with the initial limited knowledge that Country Directors and Governments have about the CSTs, may explain a reluctance to use the team.

38. It is important to ascertain, first, whether the UNFPA Representative/Country Director has sufficient information on the team and the fields of specialization available. Because of delays in recruitment of agreed candidates, some field offices have received incomplete information on the exact composition of the team. Some have not yet received updated curriculum vitae of the team members. It is also important to ensure that the Government is apprised of the availability of the team's services. In this connection, the teams in Bangkok, Kathmandu and Amman have produced and distributed information booklets on their CSTs, their composition and the technical expertise available. Other teams plan to distribute the same type of informational material. It has been suggested that, even if the Government chooses not to avail itself of these services, it should still have full access to the team and, through the team, to the population programmes and information of agencies and NGOs. Also, because the teams assist the Executive Director in ensuring the technical quality of UNFPA-supported programmes, it has been decided that each country should receive at least one monitoring visit annually for each sector in which significant investment is being made.

39. In some countries, there may be some discrepancy between the actual needs of the country and the skills represented on the team. The skills represented on the team were based on the previous distribution of regional advisory services and anticipated needs, but it is possible that a particular country would benefit from certain skills that are not represented on the team. Clearly, it is important continually to assess the team's composition in light of the region's needs. For the UNFPA Representative/Country Director, this implies keeping the team regularly informed of national technical requirements by sending updated TBPs. As noted in paragraphs 16-17, the distribution of technical competence within the teams will be evaluated at the end of 1993. In addition, the UNFPA Representatives/Country Directors have been asked to use international consultants to backstop country projects only if the expertise available at the national level and in the team is not relevant.

40. The quality and amount of detail in the TBPs will undoubtedly improve over time, as the new arrangements become standard. One UNFPA Country Director noted that, initially, it was difficult to fit these technical assistance services into work plans that had already been prepared for existing projects, but later, in the design of new projects, it was easy to identify the needed types and sources of such assistance -- from national and regional sources as well as from the teams.

41. Steps already taken to help in the formulation of comprehensive TBPs include discussion of TBPs at the UNFPA Country Directors meetings in Bali, August 1992; St. Lucia, October 1992; and Dakar, December

---

[4]See Table 11 for a summary of problems related to the establishment of the CSTs which were identified by team leaders.

1992. In addition, circular memos have been issued by the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme) to advise UNFPA Representatives/Country Directors of the importance of the TBP and the way it should be formulated to reflect programme/project needs (see also recommendation in para. 64).

2. Administrative/bureaucratic constraints

Recruitment of advisers

42. The process of recruiting advisers has been painstaking, marked by extensive consultations with the partner agencies on all actual or proposed appointments. Delay in the advertisement of vacant posts has prolonged the recruitment process. The transfer of incumbents cleared by the 1991 October IATF meeting has met with some delays and difficulties that are being addressed. In addition, some candidates recommended by the June 1992 IATF meeting still await recruitment. Thirty-eight out of 150 posts due to be filled in 1993 still have to be advertised/and or discussed with partner agencies. Recruitment for the remaining 14 posts (13 CST and 1 headquarters) is planned for 1994 (see table 12).

43. One of the administrative constraints in the recruitment process was that the positions on the teams have been designated as project posts of one to two years' duration at the L-5 level. The lack of tenure and the fact that some qualified candidates were already in rank higher than the level of the team position evidently discouraged some otherwise promising candidates. Discussions with candidates and agencies on such questions have been time-consuming. The search for bilingual candidates in some areas has also contributed to delays in the process.

Recruitment of team leaders

44. Seven of the eight team leaders have now been selected.[5] The search for suitable candidates was extensive and prolonged to ensure the highest quality and, partly, because of attempts to improve the gender balance of the teams and team leaders and also to increase the presence of specialists in MCH/FP/public health on the team.

Recruitment of general staff

45. The availability of qualified and experienced general services (GS) staff from regional offices facilitated the establishment of some of the CST offices. In others, the delay in post classification posed some difficulties in attracting qualified candidates who were reluctant to accept the six-month contracts, without tenure or benefits, that were initially offered. The ratio of one General Service staff per two Professionals assigned to the CSTs did not take account of the need for an administrative/finance assistant as well as for a driver/messenger. As the team leaders set up the CST offices, the need for these two types of services became apparent.

[5] The eighth team leader who had been selected in early 1992 withdrew at the last moment for personal reasons. A new candidate has now been recommended for consideration by the March 1993 Inter-Agency Task Force meeting.

Equipment transfers from agencies

46. Both delays and unanticipated expenses arose in transferring equipment from the agencies to the teams. In some cases, equipment was outmoded, and shipment costs were sometimes too costly. Hence, new equipment purchases were necessary for some offices. In addition, as team leaders proceeded to establish the CST offices, the need to equip each office with a vehicle became apparent. Hence, it was decided to provide additional resources for the purchase of a functional vehicle, an expense not originally anticipated.

Relationship to United Nations Development Programme

47. Attention has had to be paid to the relationships between the local UNDP office and UNFPA in the provision of administrative services to regional teams, besides those provided to country offices. There have been discussions on the appropriate form of compensation to UNDP for the provision of extra services. With the recruitment of an administrative/finance assistant for all the CST offices, the need for UNDP assistance is expected to decline considerably. Also, the relationship of the team leader to the UNFPA Representative in the country where the team is located has in some cases been perceived as problematic. It has since been clarified that, in matters related to the work of the team in the host country, the team operates under the UNFPA Representative, but that in its activities in the rest of the region, the team leader is independent of the UNFPA Representative. Still unresolved, however, are administrative dimensions of the relationship, because of UNDP's financial responsibilities with respect to UNFPA (for example, while the team leader is designated as certifying authority for the TSS budgets, the UNFPA Representative remains as the final approving authority for all UNFPA transactions).

The host-country agreement

48. Although most of the problems have now been resolved, the work of all teams was hindered by delays in the subscription of formal agreements with the host country. The host-country agreement sets out the legal status of the country support team in the country in which the team is located. It describes, inter alia, the purposes of the team; specifies its organizational independence from other United Nations agencies and entities; notes the privileges and immunities applying to the team leader, team members and their families; and notes the extension of certain rights and facilities to the team. The signing of an agreement for the Kathmandu and Dakar teams took place on 1 March and 5 March 1993, respectively. The signing of an agreement for the Harare and Addis Ababa teams is expected by March 1993; in Amman, the signing is expected to take place in April. In Santiago, the agreement continues to be processed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Bangkok, there was an exchange of letters in October 1992 between the Royal Thai Government and UNFPA on the Government's agreement with UNFPA on the arrangements.

Relationship with non-governmental organizations

49. Relationships with non-governmental organizations represented on the teams needed special attention. In the absence of tailor-made arrangements, those team members would not have had the same immunities and privileges as the balance of the team members. Also, there was a need to ensure the technical backstopping of these team members in a manner similar to the United Nations agency headquarters backstopping of the balance of the team. To solve these potential problems, it was decided that UNFPA would recruit the NGO team member, and, through a separate agreement with the NGO, provide support for the costs necessary for backstopping the position. As a result, the NGO team member now has the same

privileges as all other members and is backstopped by his or her organization in the same way that all other members are backstopped by their agencies.

3. Agency headquarters specialists and coordinators

Recruitment of specialists

50. There has been delay in the recruitment of headquarters specialists and coordinators. In some cases, there has been disagreement on the appropriateness of candidates with regard to nationality quotas, which some agencies are required to follow for regular and extra-budgetary funds. In others, the deferral has been due to misperception by some agencies on what the specialists' functions are and how these differ from those prevailing in previous arrangements involving interregional activities. In a few cases, agency rules giving priority to internal candidates after IATF agreement on certain candidates had been reached have stalled the recruitment process.

Relationship between agency headquarters and country support teams

51. In mid-1992, team leaders visited the headquarters of various agencies for orientation (see para. 18). However, there has been no systematic follow-up of these visits. Communications are not yet systematic between all agency headquarters and the teams.

Agency headquarters work planning

52. Work plans formulated for the ILO's TSS posts at headquarters include several major categories of activity which are recognized as the basic function of the agency headquarters with regard to the TSS. These are as follows:

(a) Providing the CSTs with state-of-the art knowledge and information related to the specialist's expertise;

(b) Providing technical support in the preparation of comprehensive population policies and programmes;

(c) Playing an advocacy role in integrating population perspectives into the agency's activities; reviewing existing research on the specialty and disseminating findings as appropriate; providing TSS of a specialized nature at the country level according to technical backstopping plans; and

(d) Advising on needs and priorities for research and training and participating in training programmes.

53. FAO and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Development (DESD) sent work plans for the headquarters specialists which are now being reviewed by UNFPA. WHO prepared work plans which are being discussed in conjunction with a revision of job descriptions. UNESCO and WHO regional offices have not yet submitted its work plans.

Agency headquarters and the shift from inter-country programmes to agency support-cost arrangements

54. The new arrangements require a fundamental shift in the administrative and technical relationships between headquarters and advisers in the field, whose work is structured as part of a team rather than solely as an agency representative. There are indications that some agencies may be experiencing difficulty in adjusting the role of its specialists. A key part of the new arrangements is the backstopping of the team by agency specialists at headquarters who provide the team with state-of-the-art information and research so that these can be integral to the team's contribution to meeting country needs. While under certain conditions agency specialists may be called upon to provide technical backstopping to countries, this role is complementary to that of the CST advisers who, under the new arrangements, are the primary providers of technical backstopping at the country level. Under the TSS arrangements, team members will not work exclusively on projects supported/executed by agencies. In addition, there are intrinsic difficulties in separating financial/administrative aspects from the technical aspects of execution affecting the distribution of labour between CST members and other agency officers.

4. Financial constraints

55. Governing Council decision 91/37, paragraph 10, authorized the Executive Director "to commit an amount of $130.3 million over the four-year period 1992-1995, not exceeding 13.8 per cent of programmable resources, and to allocate these funds for technical support services and for administrative and operational services, based on a compensation arrangement with executing agencies of 7.5 per cent of project expenditures incurred for the implementation of country projects, with the exception of the United Nations in 1992, for which the current level of 13 per cent applies".

56. In the "Work Plan for 1993-1996 and Request for Programme Expenditure Authority" submitted to the thirty-ninth session of the Governing Council, the Executive Director reported that "the resources foreseen for TSS are $89.0 million. The Administrative and Operational Services costs are estimated at $30.0 million, which is based on 7.5 per cent on country projects executed by agencies in the United Nations system" (DP/1992/26, para. 20).

57. To implement the TSS arrangements, an amount of approximately $20.1 million was allocated for 1992 as follows: $15.0 million for salaries of 149 TSS professionals; $1.4 million for salaries of 79 administrative support personnel; $0.3 million for other administrative support costs at the agency headquarters; and $3.4 million for other items such as travel, office equipment and furniture, vehicles, electronic data processing equipment, rental and maintenance of premises, office supplies, and report and printing costs as well as communication costs. In addition, guidelines were issued on the use of budget line 1503 in country projects to pay for the technical backstopping missions of TSS advisers.

58. All positions in the TSS were budgeted using the pro-forma costs for P-5 levels set at $100,000 per annum for 1992, with an annual inflation rate of 10 per cent. The calculation for General Service staff was based upon the ratio one per two Professionals. As noted in paragraph 57, it was estimated that 149 TSS professionals and 79 administrative support personnel would be recruited in 1992.

59. In view of UNFPA's limited financial resources in 1992, the TSS budget was reduced from $20.1 million to $15.7 million (see table 13). The concerned units were instructed to review their implementation plans for 1992 and to check vacant posts for which recruitment could be postponed. The 1992 allocation was distributed as follows: $11.3 million for salaries of TSS professionals; $1.8 million for salaries of administrative

support personnel; $0.2 million for other administrative support costs at the agency headquarters; and $2.4 million for other items such as travel, office equipment and furniture, vehicles, electronic data processing equipment, rental and maintenance of premises, office supplies, and report and printing costs as well as communication costs. Most of the savings resulted from delays in recruitment of TSS professionals. Delays in recruitment of three team leaders also resulted in savings from funds allocated to establish three CST offices. Some were used to pay for salaries of general service staff which were higher than those planned. In the case of equipment, front loading was necessary during the first year.

60. The implications of the new financial arrangements under the TSS system also had to be repeatedly clarified. Based on the principle of cost-sharing between UNFPA and other United Nations agencies and entities, a compensation agreement with executing agencies of 7.5 per cent of project expenditures for the implementation of country projects (with the exception of the United Nations in 1992, for which the current level in 1992 applied) was approved by the Governing Council in its decision 91/37. Team members will concentrate on providing technical assistance to country programmes and projects.

61. As of 3 March 1993, allocations amounted to $19,162,123. Estimated expenditures for 1992 amounted to $14,498,207. Costs of technical backstopping missions (BL1503) in 1992 have been estimated to be $179,315.

III. PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE IMPLEMENTATION OF TSS ARRANGEMENTS

62. As with any new arrangement, there was in the first few months some uncertainty on the part of those concerned (Country Directors, agencies and Governments) of how exactly the new system would function. There were indications that the roles and responsibilities of each one were not fully understood. As the system becomes fully operational, such misunderstandings will have been clarified to a large extent and will continue to be addressed. Thus at this early stage of implementation, it would be premature to assess whether the successor support-cost arrangements are meeting their primary objective -- to provide coordinated, effective and timely support for population programmes and policies in developing countries. However, reports from the team leaders and from UNFPA Representatives/Country Directors indicate that those teams that have been active for several months and that have been appropriately engaged by UNFPA Representatives/Country Directors on behalf of the countries concerned are indeed making much progress towards meeting that objective. An evaluation has been planned for the end of 1993.

63. Notwithstanding the accomplishments to date, there is a need to accelerate the process of establishing the teams at full operational strength and putting in place the mechanisms of communication and interaction with partners. This section presents recommendations in three major areas: (a) the relationships between the country support teams and the UNFPA Representative/Country Director, especially with regard to the preparation of technical backstopping plans; (b) relationships between the country support teams and the agency headquarters; and (c) team activities.

Relationship between country support team and the UNFPA Representative/Country Director

64. To ensure the optimal effectiveness of the relationship between the CSTs and the UNFPA Representative/Country Director, the following steps are being or have been taken:

(a) Encourage the UNFPA Representative/Country Director to inform the Government of the existence of the CSTs and the skills available, and to draw up detailed technical backstopping plans that

identify the country's needs for national technical assistance, regional technical assistance through the CSTs, and international assistance. UNFPA headquarters needs to reiterate for all UNFPA Representatives/Country Directors that the teams have been established to serve the countries through missions undertaken only with the explicit request and consent of the concerned UNFPA Representative/Country Director, in consultation with the Government. Because of the pivotal role of the UNFPA Representatives/Country Directors in the new system, the discharge of their responsibility with respect to the teams will be a major element in the evaluation of their performance. UNFPA headquarters has already issued several circular memos on the progress of the successor support-cost arrangements. The latest such memo from the Deputy Executive Director (Programme) emphasizes the above points. It also notes that CSTs have been instructed to assist in the drafting of technical backstopping plans, on the request of UNFPA Representatives/Country Directors. In addition, regional meetings for UNFPA Representatives/Country Directors are expected to deal with, inter alia, the relationships between UNFPA Representatives/Country Directors and the country support teams, to assist the Executive Director in meeting her responsibility for accountability;

(b) Provide funds to permit country support team advisers to undertake missions that are not project-specific and consequently cannot be financed out of project budgets. The missions might include, for example, visits to countries for discussions with the Government on policy matters, identification of emerging needs not covered by PRSD or other programming missions, or visits to countries not covered by UNFPA Representatives/Country Directors. Relevant instructions have been issued;

(c) Promote the provision of technical assistance not only through field visits but also through dissemination of technical papers and other documentation produced by the CST staff to countries; and

(d) Evaluate, towards the end of 1993, the quality and timeliness of services provided by the CSTs preliminary to decisions on modifying the distribution of advisers or fields of competence within and among teams.

Relationships between country support team, agency headquarters and agency regional offices

65. To overcome the problem of insufficient contact between the teams and agency headquarters and to strengthen the backstopping provided by most of the partner agencies, it is recommended that UNFPA pursue this matter with the agencies directly and in the context of the IATF meetings. In addition, it has been recommended that the country support teams assist the agencies by informing them of the teams' needs for technical backstopping. Country support team members should be communicating regularly with specialists and coordinators at their respective agency headquarters.

66. The functions of the country support team need to be emphasized as technical rather than administrative. For example, the team provides assistance in identifying institutions for fellowships, advising on the range of appropriate contraceptive methods or planning financial requirements of country programmes/projects. Administrative functions, such as procurement or purchase of contraceptives, are the responsibility of executing agencies. For such functions, United Nations agencies are to rely on capacities covered by AOS equivalent to 7.5 per cent of total project expenditures.

67. The Inter-Agency Task Force, which last met in March 1993, examined the procedures and practices related to the implementation of the TSS arrangements, including financial as well as performance evaluation and reporting procedures. The Task Force also addressed such issues as guidance needed by the regional

offices of the agencies on the relationships between the CST adviser and his or her parent agency and certain administrative arrangements -- leave, travel -- with respect to team members and their respective agencies.

Team activities

68. Country support teams must provide technical assistance within the framework of the programme approach to ensure coordination of activities in all sectors and to improve programme sustainability. UNFPA must also ensure that the programme approach is well understood at the operational level.

69. The teams must prepare an inventory of regional training and research institutions in all sectors in which UNFPA is involved. As country support team advisers are expected to develop training programmes as required, they would benefit from updates on technical issues. In specific sectors identified by UNFPA Representatives/Country Directors, the teams, in consultation with agency specialists, may develop training programmes, the cost of which would be paid from programme budgets of countries agreeing to participate.

70. It is recommended that the teams become more actively involved in all stages of the PRSD exercise, the aim of which is to develop a coherent, long-term national population strategy. The teams should also ensure that national counterparts take part in project formulation, because their contribution is essential for successful project implementation.

71. A team approach should be adopted when preparing project documents, with peer appraisal and review of the documents being formulated by team members. Team advisers should participate in tripartite review meetings whenever their technical inputs are required. The team will also play a major monitoring role, as discussed in paragraph 33.

72. Experiences vary from country to country. Thus, there is need to document and identify the reasons for success and failure of technical backstopping and, in this connection, it is important to address the technical issues involved in recording, maintaining and permitting access to the teams' experiences with the support of UNFPA headquarters.

73. It is critical that UNFPA Representatives/Country Directors provide a timely assessment of technical assistance provided by the CST members. This would ensure that positive results are shared with other team members and that problems, whether of a technical, operational or administrative nature, are immediately resolved to assist coordination of future assistance. These inputs are key to the evaluation of the performance of the CST advisers themselves and, above all, are decisive elements in an evaluation of the validity of the TSS system itself.

IV. CONCLUSION

74. With sustained efforts and on the basis of continuous consultation with UNFPA partner agencies, adjustments will be made to ensure that the TSS arrangements truly respond to the changing requirements for technical backstopping as requested by the countries themselves. This innovative system of providing multi-disciplinary technical assistance using a comprehensive programme approach will certainly make a crucial contribution towards increased national self-reliance and improved population policies and programmes.

V. RECOMMENDATION

75. The Executive Director recommends that the Governing Council:

(a) Take note of the progress report on UNFPA successor support cost arrangements;

(b) Also take note of the progress made in implementing the technical support services arrangements, in particular the establishment of UNFPA country support teams;

(c) Welcome the Executive Director's proposals contained in this report to improve implementation of the technical support services arrangements; and

(d) Authorize the Executive Director to make appropriate arrangements to improve the implementation of the TSS arrangements.

Table 1. Regional and sectoral distribution of technical support professionals when fully operational, as approved by 1992 Governing Council

SECTOR	COUNTRY PROGRAMME TECHNICAL SUPPORT TEAMS					AGENCY HEADQUARTERS						REGIONAL OFFICES			Total
	Africa	Arab States & Eur.	Asia & Pacific	Latin Amer. & Carib.	Sub-Total	FAO	ILO	UNESCO	UN[a]	WHO	Sub-Total	UN Reg. Comm.	WHO	Sub-Total	
Basic Data Collection and Population Dynamics	12	3	4	1	20	-	-	-	9	-	9	-	-	-	29
Population Policy Formulation, Evaluation and Implementation[b]	9	1	10	1	21	2	3	1	2	-	8	-	-	-	29
Maternal and Child Health and Family Planning	12	5	5	4	26	-	-	-	-	5	5	-	6	6	37
Information, Education and Communication	15	5	12	3	35	2	3	4	-	-	9	-	-	-	44
Women	2	1	3	1	7	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	9
Other[c]	3	2	4	2	11	1	1	-	1	-	3	2	-	2	16
Total	53	17	38	12	120	6	8	5	12	5	36	2	6	8	164[d]

[a] The Department of Economic and Social Development (DESD) in New York.
[b] This category includes the integration of population variables into development planning.
[c] The "other" category includes the team leaders; coordinators at headquarters and the regional commissions; and other multisectoral experts, such as an FAO position in population in fisheries and forestry, an NGO position in sociocultural research in the Arab States, an NGO position in management in Latin America and the Caribbean, and a UNFPA position in management in Asia and the Pacific.
[d] This total reflects the number of technical support professionals to be placed by 1995. Positions will be phased in during 1992-1994.

/...

Table 2. Technical support professionals in place by sector, as of 31 January 1992

SECTOR	TECHNICAL SUPPORT TEAMS					AGENCY HEADQUARTERS						REGIONAL OFFICES			Total
	Africa	Arab States[a]	Asia & Pacific	Latin Amer. & Carib.	Sub-Total	FAO	ILO	UNESCO	UN[b]	WHO	Sub-Total	UN Reg. Comm.	WHO	Sub-Total	
Basic Data Collection and Population Dynamics	12[c]	3[c]	3[c]	1[c]	19[c]	-	-	-	9[c]	-	9[c]	-	-	-	28[c]
Population Policy Formulation, Evaluation and Implementation[e]	4	-	7[d]	1[c]	12	1	3	-	2[c]		6	-	-	-	18
Maternal and Child Health and Family Planning	2	1	4	-	7	-	-	-	-	3	3	-	4	4	14
Information, Education and Communication	8	4	9	1	22	1	2	1	-	-	4	-	-	-	26
Women	-	-	1	-	1	1	1	-		-	2	-	-	-	3
Other[f]	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1[c]	-	2	2[c]	-	2	4
Total	26	8	24	3	61	3	7	1	12[c]	3	26	2[c]	4	6	93

NOTE: The total of 93 includes 57 incumbents (39 team members and 18 headquarters posts) and 36 UN positions currently under discussion.

[a] Arab States and Europe.
[b] DIESA and UNDTCD in New York.
[c] Under discussion with the United Nations, which will officially participate in the new arrangement as of 1 January 1993.
[d] This figure includes 2 United Nations advisers. See note c.
[e] This category includes the integration of population variables into development planning.
[f] The "other" category includes the team leaders; coordinators at headquarters and the regional commissions; and other multisectoral experts, such as an FAO position in population in fisheries and forestry, an NGO position in sociocultural research in the Arab States and an NGO position in management in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Table 3. Technical support professionals in place, by sector, as of 3 March 1993

SECTOR	TECHNICAL SUPPORT TEAMS					AGENCY HEADQUARTERS						REGIONAL OFFICES			Total
	Africa	Arab States & Eur.	Asia & Pacific	Latin Amer. & Carib.	Sub-Total	FAO	ILO	UNESCO	UN[a]	WHO	Sub-Total	UN Reg. Comm.	WHO	Sub-Total	
Basic Data Collection and Population Dynamics	12[b]	1[b]	2[b]	1	16[b]	-	-	-	6[b]	-	6[b]	-	-	-	22[b]
Population Policy Formulation, Evaluation and Implementation[d]	4	1	6[c]	-	11	1	3	-	1[b]	-	5	-	-	-	16
Maternal and Child Health and Family Planning	8	-	2[c]	4	14	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	3	3	19
Information, Education and Communication	9	4	8	3	24	1	1	5	-	-	7	-	-	-	31
Women	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	-		-	2	-	-	-	3
Other[f]	2	1	2	2	7	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	8
Total	35	7	20	11	73	4	5	5	7[b]	2	23	-	3	3	99

[a] The Department of Economic and Social Development (DESD) in New York.
[b] The United Nations officially participated in the TSS arrangements on 1 January 1993.
[c] This figure includes 2 United Nations advisers. See note b.
[d] This category includes the integration of population variables into development planning.
[e] This figure includes one United Nations adviser. See note b.
[f] The "other" category includes the team leaders; coordinators at headquarters and the regional commissions; and other multisectoral experts, such as an FAO position in population in fisheries and forestry, an NGO position in management in Latin America and the Caribbean, and a UNFPA position in management in Asia and the Pacific.

Table 4. Planned regional and sectoral distribution of technical support professionals, when fully operational in 1995, in response to Governing Council Decision 92/32, as of 3 March 1993

SECTOR	COUNTRY PROGRAMME TECHNICAL SUPPORT TEAMS					AGENCY HEADQUARTERS						REGIONAL OFFICES			Total
	Africa	Arab States & Eur.	Asia & Pacific	Latin Amer. & Carib.	Sub-Total	FAO	ILO	UNESCO	UN[a]	WHO	Sub-Total	UN Reg. Comm.	WHO	Sub-Total	
Basic Data Collection and Population Dynamics	12	3	3	1	19	-	-	-	9	-	9	-	-	-	28
Population Policy Formulation, Evaluation and Implementation[b]	9[c]	1	9[c]	1	20	2	3	0	2	-	7	-	-	-	27
Maternal and Child Health and Family Planning	12	6	8	4	30	-	-	-	-	5	5	-	6	6	41[d]
Information, Education and Communication	15[c]	5	11[c]	3	34	2	3	5	-	-	9	-	-	-	44
Women	2	1	3	1	7	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	9
Other[e]	3	1	4	2	10	1	1	-	1	-	3	2	-	2	15
Total	53	17	38	12	120	6	8	5	12	5	36	2	6	8	164[f]

[a] DESD in New York.
[b] This category includes the integration of population variables into development planning.
[c] Depending on results of 1993 review of the TSS arrangements, 8 non-MCH/FP CST and 1 headquarters posts which are to be filled in 1994 may be subject to revision and/or conversion to MCH/FP posts.
[d] May be increased to 50, depending on 1993 review. See c above.
[e] The "other" category includes the team leaders; coordinators at headquarters and the regional commissions; and other multisectoral experts, such as an FAO position in population in fisheries and forestry, an NGO position in management in Latin America and the Caribbean, and a UNFPA position in management in Asia and the Pacific.
[f] This total reflects the number of technical support professionals to be placed by 1995. Positions will be phased in during 1992-1994.

Table 5. Countries covered by Country Support Teams
(Part 1)

AFRICA

Head Office: Dakar CST for Africa I	Head Office: Addis Ababa CST for Africa II	Head Office: Harare CST for Africa III
Team Leader: Marie-Angelique Savane	Team Leader: Vacant	Team Leader: Kerstin Trone
Benin Burkina Faso Cameroon Cape Verde Cote D'Ivoire Equatorial Guinea Gambia Guinea Guinea-Bissau Liberia Mali Mauritania Niger Senegal Sierra Leone Togo Zaire	Burundi Central African Republic Chad Congo Ethiopia Gabon Ghana Kenya Nigeria Rwanda United Republic of Tanzania Uganda	Angola Botswana Comoros Lesotho Madagascar Malawi Mauritius Mozambique Namibia Sao Tome and Principe Seychelles Swaziland Zambia Zimbabwe

/...

Table 5. Countries covered by Country Support Teams
(Part 2)

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Head Office: Bangkok Office for East and South-East Asia	Head Office: Kathmandu Office for South and West Asia	Head Office: Suva Office for the Pacific Islands
Team Leader: Ghazi Farooq	Team Leader: Shahida Azfar	Team Leader: Stephen Chee (under recruitment)
Brunei Darussalam Cambodia Democratic People's Republic of Korea Territory of Hong Kong Indonesia Lao People's Democratic Republic Malaysia Mongolia Myanmar China Philippines Republic of Korea Singapore Thailand Viet Nam	Afghanistan Bangladesh Bhutan India Iran (Islamic Republic of) Maldives Nepal Pakistan Sri Lanka	Cook Islands Fiji Kiribati Marshall Islands Micronesia (Federated States of) Nauru Niue Palau Papua New Guinea Solomon Islands Tokelau Tonga Tuvalu Vanuatu Samoa

/...

Table 5. Countries covered by Country Support Teams
(Part 3)

EQUIPO DE APOYO DEL FNUAP
OFICINA PARA AMERICA LATINA Y EL CARIBE

Head Office: Santiago	
Team Leader: Joop Alberts	
Argentina	Guyana
Barbados	Haiti
Bolivia	Honduras
Brazil	Jamaica
Chile	Mexico
Colombia	Nicaragua
Cuba	Panama
Costa Rica	Paraguay
Dominican Republic	Peru
Ecuador	Trinidad and Tobago
El Salvador	Uruguay
Guatemala	Venezuela
	English speaking Caribbean Islands

ARAB STATES AND EUROPE

Head Office: Amman	
Team Leader: Atef Khalifa	
Algeria	Morocco
Bahrain	Oman
Djibouti	Qatar
Egypt	Saudi Arabia
Iraq	Somalia
Jordan	Sudan
Kuwait	Syria
Lebanon	Tunisia
Libya	United Arab Emirates
	Yemen

Table 6. Distribution of TSS professionals by gender

	Gender		Total
CSTs	M	F	
Africa I - Dakar	12	1	13
Africa II - Addis	9	2	11
Africa III - Harare	9	2	11
Sub-total	30	5	35
Arab States	6	1	7
Sub-total	6	1	7
Asia and Pacific			
Bangkok	8	1	9
Kathmandu	5	2	7
Suva	4		4
Sub-total	17	3	20
Latin America and Caribbean	7	4	11
Sub-total	7	4	11
TOTAL	60	13	73
Agency Headquarters	21	5	26
Sub-total	21	5	26
GRAND TOTAL	81	18	99

Table 7. Nationality of technical support professionals, by location (Part 1)

Nationality	CST Africa	CST Arab States	CST Asia and Pacific	CST LAC	TSS HQ Spec./ Coord.	Total
AFRICA	(23)				(4)	(27)
Algeria					1	1
Cameroon	4					4
Congo	1					1
Ethiopia	1					1
Gambia	1				1	2
Ghana	2				2	4
Guinea	1					1
Kenya	1					1
Liberia	1					1
Mali	2					2
Nigeria	3					3
Rwanda	1					1
Senegal	2					2
Sierra Leone	1					1
Swaziland	1					1
Uganda	1					1
ARAB STATES	(2)	(5)			(5)	(12)
Egypt		1				1
Jordan		2				2
Lebanon		1				1
Sudan	1				1	2
Syrian Arab Republic		1			1	2
Tunisia	1				3	4

Table 7. Nationality of technical support professionals, by location (Part 2)

Nationality	CST Africa	CST Arab States	CST Asia and Pacific	CST LAC	TSS HQ Spec./ Coord.	Total
ASIA AND PACIFIC	(3)		(18)		(6)	(27)
Australia			1			1
Bangladesh			2			2
India	2		3		3	8
Indonesia			1		1	2
Malaysia			2			2
New Zealand	1					1
Pakistan			4		1	5
Philippines			2		1	3
Rep. of Korea			1			1
Sri Lanka			1			1
Tonga			1			1
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN	(1)			(8)	(3)	(12)
Argentina				2		2
Bolivia				1		1
Brazil					1	1
Chile				2		2
Colombia				2	1	3
Dominican Rep.				1		1
Haiti	1					1
Uruguay					1	1

Table 7. Nationality of technical support professionals, by location (Part 3)

Nationality	CST Africa	CST Arab States	CST Asia and Pacific	CST LAC	TSS HQ Spec./ Coord.	Total
EUROPE	(5)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(5)	(14)
Belgium	1				1	2
France		1			1	2
Netherlands	1			1		2
Poland					1	1
Sweden	1					1
Turkey			1			1
U.K.	2		1		1	4
Yugoslavia					1	1
NORTH AMERICA	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(3)	(7)
Canada	1				1	2
U.S.A.		1	1	1	2	5
Total	35	7	21	10	26	99

Source: PCMFSO, UNFPA

Table 8. Activities undertaken by country support teams in selected regions as of January 1993

Activity	Dakar	Amman	Bangkok	Kathmandu	Santiago
Review project documents Country (ies)	Cape Verde Chad Eq. Guinea Gambia Senegal	Egypt Jordan Morocco Sudan Syrian Arab Rep. Tunisia Yemen	China India Lao PDR Mongolia Nepal Pakistan Philippines Thailand Viet Nam	Bhutan Nepal Pakistan	Bolivia Colombia Ecuador El Salvador Panama
Participate in Programme Review and Strategy Development missions Which countries?	-	-	-	-	Nicaragua (2)
Participate in tripartite review Country (ies) Number of team members participating	Cape Verde (1)	Sudan (1) Syrian Arab Rep. (2) Tunisia (1)	China (2) Philippines (1)	India (2) (2 projects) Philippines (1)	Paraguay (1)
TOTAL COUNTRIES	5	7	9	5	7

Source: UNFPA Survey of Team Leaders, January 1993; Work Plans.
Note: In 1993, certain advisers on the Bangkok and Kathmandu teams will, by agreement between the two teams, handle projects they formerly handled. Hence, the names of some countries appear under both teams. A number of missions undertaken by incumbents who had not moved to the CST office in Addis have not been included in this table.

Table 9. Nature and number of technical backstopping missions undertaken by country support teams, as of January 1993

Team and countries visited	Number of team members	Joint (J) or solo (S) mission	Number of visits	Nature of assistance and/or sector
Dakar				
Mali	2	J	na	Population policy
Chad	2	J	na	Population census; cartography
Eq. Guinea	1	S	na	Census cartography
Amman				
Egypt	3	S	3	Project formulation TEC monitoring
Jordan	1	S	1	Project formulation Review activities
Morocco	1	S	2	Project formulation Follow-up activities
Sudan	4	S	5	Census communications campaign; Follow-up activities; project revision
Syrian Arab Rep.	3	S	3	Technical support; review needs
Tunisia	1	S	2	Project formulation
Bangkok				
Bangladesh	2	J	na	Help develop World Bank-funded International Population Project
China	5	1J/4S	na	Backstopping of ongoing projects
India	1	S	na	Project development
Malaysia	1	S	na	Development pre-project proposals
Mongolia	1	S	na	Project development
Nepal	1	S	na	Project development
Philippines	4	1J/3S	4	Backstopping of projects, mid-term evaluation
Viet Nam	8	2J/4S	6	Backstopping of projects; strategy development project
Kathmandu				
India	2	2S	1 ea.	To draft project documents for phase II
Pakistan	1	S	1	To assist in development of strategies

Santiago				Pop. education formal sector
Bolivia	1		1	Evaluation projects Pop./Dev.
Colombia	1		1	Proj. population; women/population
El Salvador	1		1	Data collection
Panama	1		1	Project formulation formal pop. education
Paraguay	1		1	Project formulation formal pop. education

Sources: UNFPA Survey of Team Leaders, January 1993; quarterly progress reports.
Notes: na = not ascertained
In addition to the above, team leaders visited countries to discuss new arrangements with the UNFPA Representative/Country Director.

Table 10. Receipt and rating of technical bankstopping plans by team leaders, as of January 1993

	Technical Backstopping Plans:		Helpfulness of backstopping plans:			Plans indicate full scope of assistance needs (national, team, international)	
Team	Received	Still due	Very	Moderately	Not very	Most indicated	Most did not indicate
Dakar	9	5		x			x
Harare	3	11					x
Amman	7	12	x	x			x
Bangkok	All for 1992	0		x			x
Kathmandu	6	3		x			x
Santiago	6	19	x (few)	x (most)			x

Source: UNFPA Survey of Team Leaders, January 1993.

Table 11. Team leaders' identification of problems

Problems	Dakar	Harare	Amman	Bangkok	Kath-mandu	Santi-ago
Recruitment/deferred arrivals of advisers	x	x	x		x	
Delayed, insufficiently detailed TBPs; initiation of missions by CDs			x	x		x
Host-Country agreement		x	x			
Premises		x	x	x		
Equipment/equipment transfers		x	x			
Transport		x				
Recruitment administrative staff support				x	x	x
Recruitment bi-lingual secretaries		x				
Financial and administrative problems (unspecified)	x					

Source: UNFPA Survey of Team Leaders, January 1993

Table 12. TSS vacancies in 1993-1994, as of 3 March 1993

SECTOR	TECHNICAL SUPPORT TEAMS					AGENCY HEADQUARTERS						REGIONAL OFFICES			
	Africa	Arab States & Eur.	Asia & Pacific	Latin Amer. & Carib.	Sub-Total	FAO	ILO	UNESCO	UN[a]	WHO	Sub-Total	UN Reg. Comm.	WHO	Sub-Total	Total
Basic Data Collection and Population Dynamics	-	-	1[b]	-	1[b]	-	-	-	3[b]	-	3[b]	-	-	-	4[b]
Population Policy Formulation, Evaluation and Implementation[d]	4[c]	-	2	-	6	1	-	-	1[b]		2	-	-	-	8
Maternal and Child Health and Family Planning	3[e]	3	5[f]	0	11	-	-	-	-	3	3	-	3	3	17
Information, Education and Communication	5[g]	1	2[h]	-	8	1	2[i]	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	11
Women	2	1	3	-	6	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-	6
Other[j]	1	-	1[k]	-	2	-	1	-	1[b]	-	2	2	-	2	6
Total	15	5	14	0	34	2	3	-	5[b]	3	13	2	3	5	52

Note: This table does not include 13 CST posts (Africa: 3; Arab States: 5; Asia: 4; Latin America: 1) where candidates have received IATF clearance and are under recruitment.

[a] DESD in New York.
[b] The United Nations officially participated in the new arrangement on 1 January 1993.
[c] 1994=2
[d] This category includes the integration of population variables into development planning.
[e] 1994=3
[f] 1994=1
[g] 1994=4
[h] 1994=2
[i] 1994=1 (HQ)
[j] The "other" category includes the team leaders; coordinators at headquarters and the regional commissions; and other multisectoral experts, such as an FAO position in population in fisheries and forestry, an NGO position in management in Latin America and the Caribbean, and a UNFPA position in management in Asia and the Pacific.
[k] 1994=1

TABLE 13. TECHNICAL SUPPORT SERVICES

CURRENT STATUS OF ALLOCATIONS
(in US dollars)
(As of 28 February 1993)

ALLOCATIONS / UNIT	*PLANNED 1992	ACTUAL 1992	*PLANNED 1993	ACTUAL 1993
HEADQUARTERS	6,132,904	5,057,374	6,388,608	4,603,316
CST AFRICA	5,721,196	4,650,239	6,354,698	6,434,502
CST ASIA AND PACIFIC	4,361,000	3,653,437	4,585,340	4,306,000
CST ARAB STATES	2,246,440	1,340,000	2,357,406	2,182,000
CST LATIN AM & CARIB	1,638,460	990,714	1,713,948	1,636,305
TOTAL	20,100,000	15,691,764	21,400,000	19,162,123

*Figures correspond to the original levels approved by the Governing Council. By Executive Committee decision, measures were taken to reduce 1992 budget to US$15 million. The figures planned for 1993 remain unchanged.

DP

UNITED
NATIONS

Governing Council
of the
United Nations
Development Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/1993/32/Corr.1
15 April 1993

ENGLISH ONLY

Fortieth session
1 - 18 June 1993, New York
Item 5 of the provisional agenda
UNFPA

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

Progress report on UNFPA successor support cost arrangements

Corrigendum

Page 14, paragraph 56, should read

56. In the "Work Plan for 1993-1996 and Request for Programme Expenditure Authority" submitted to the thirty-ninth session of the Governing Council, the Executive Director reported that the resources foreseen for TSS are $89.0 million. The Administrative and Operational Services costs are estimated at $30.0 million, which is based on 7.5 per cent on country projects executed by agencies in the United Nations system (DP/1992/26, para. 19).

Page 31, Table 9, entry for Egypt under column Nature of assistance and/or sector

Replace TEC monitoring with IEC monitoring

DP

UNITED
NATIONS

Governing Council
of the
United Nations
Development Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/1993/33
30 March 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fortieth session
1 - 18 June 1993, New York
Item 5 of the provisional agenda
UNFPA

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

Report of the Executive Director reviewing the Fund's experience in implementing the priority-country system

Summary

This report of the Executive Director on priority countries is in response to decision 88/34 A, paragraph 6, of the Governing Council at its thirty-fifth session. This report calls for a decision on the part of the Council in regard to maintaining the present criteria for the system of priority countries with periodic updating.

/...

93-18501 D

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION 3

II. BACKGROUND 3

III. THE EXPERIENCE OF UNFPA WITH THE SYSTEM OF PRIORITY COUNTRIES 5

A. General trends 6

B. Assistance to priority countries by region 7

C. Non-quantitative aspects 8

IV. CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING PRIORITY STATUS OF COUNTRIES 8

A. General observations 8

B. Experience with current criteria 10

C. Revision of criteria and thresholds 11

D. Programme strategies 12

V. IMPLICATIONS OF MAINTAINING THE PRESENT CRITERIA 13

VI. RECOMMENDATION 14

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Governing Council at its thirty-fifth session requested in decision 88/34 A, paragraph 6, that the Executive Director report to the Governing Council at its fortieth session on the Fund's experience in implementing the modified criteria for selecting priority countries and in reaching the target of allocating 80 per cent of country programme resources to priority countries. The Council at its thirty-eighth session reiterated the need, as emphasized in Governing Council decision 90/35 B of 20 June 1990, to meet the target of an 80 per cent allocation of country programme resources to priority countries by 1994.

2. This report, which is being submitted in response to these requests, first briefly reviews the evolution of the system of designating priority countries and analyses the trends in resource allocation to priority and non-priority (other) countries in the various regions over the period 1983-1992. The report then provides an analysis of differences between priority and other countries. The final sections are devoted to an assessment of the system of designating priority countries including a discussion of the current criteria and their threshold levels.

3. The issue of the distribution of resources among countries remains a concern for UNFPA. The criteria used to identify countries in need of priority assistance need close consideration and require periodic review and revision, if necessary, to reflect changes in demographic and socio-economic conditions in developing countries. In categorizing countries for UNFPA assistance, it should be noted that UNFPA is expected to provide assistance to all countries for which UNDP has allocated indicative planning figures (IPFs). For those member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) of the former Soviet Union that are allocated IPFs, UNFPA should also be able to consider providing assistance to these countries, within the availability of its resources.

II. BACKGROUND

4. There has been a continuing dialogue between UNFPA and the Governing Council on the priority country system. The Executive Director has reported on UNFPA's experience with the system of priority countries, which began to function in 1977, at various sessions of the Council.[1] The most recent report, to the thirty-fifth session, was "The programming experience of the Fund in using the existing set of criteria and suggestions for modification of the criteria in the designation of priority countries" (DP/1988/38). Additionally, the Executive Director includes information on priority countries in each issue of the Fund's annual report. Most recently, the Executive Director's annual report for 1990 included a special section on the implementation of the modified criteria in designating priority countries, as requested by the Council in its decision 88/34 A of 1 July 1988. The evolution of the system of priority countries has been described in detail in many previous reports (DP/1982/30/Add.1, DP/1983/22, DP/1986/38 and DP/1988/38); therefore, it will only be briefly outlined in this report.

---

[1] The reports, listed in order of submission, are: Allocations of UNFPA resources and proposed alternate funding arrangements (DP/118); Priorities for future allocations of UNFPA resources (DP/186); Application of criteria for establishing priorities (DP/232); Application of criteria for establishing priorities (DP/263); The future role of UNFPA: UNFPA in the 1980s (DP/530); The UNFPA experience with the system of priority countries (DP/1982/30/Add.1); and The experience gained by the Fund in using the present set of criteria for selecting priority countries (DP/1986/38).

5. The system of priority countries for population assistance was approved in principle at the twenty-second session of the Governing Council (1976) and the criteria and threshold levels were endorsed by the Council at its twenty-third session in 1977 (decision 77/5, para. 371 (c)). To determine which countries would qualify for priority assistance, the Fund selected one economic indicator (per capita gross national income) and four demographic indicators (population growth rate per annum, gross reproduction rate, infant mortality rate, and density of agricultural population on arable land). These indicators were considered indicative of major population problems and, to an extent, of a country's level of development. By applying certain threshold levels[2] for the demographic indicators and by introducing an upper limit for the level of per capita national income of $400, a group of 40 countries, each having met the income requirement and two of the four demographic criteria, were designated as priority countries. Additionally, 14 countries were designated as borderline countries for UNFPA assistance. These latter countries would have qualified as priority countries had a 2 per cent variation from the threshold levels been allowed. Thus, a total of 54 countries were designated as either priority or borderline countries in 1977.

6. At its twenty-third session in 1977, the Governing Council also approved the Executive Director's recommendation that two thirds of the total programme resources available at the country level should be allocated for assistance to priority countries as a group (decision 775, para. 371 (c)). Furthermore, as proposed by the Executive Director and endorsed by the Governing Council, UNFPA would be flexible in extending population assistance to priority countries. This meant in practice that developing countries included in the priority group were to receive UNFPA assistance for a wider range of population activities.

7. In 1982, UNFPA undertook a major review of the priority country system as requested by the Governing Council at its twenty-eighth session (1981). In document DP/1982/30/Add.1. the Executive Director reviewed the system extensively in terms of resource distribution to the priority, borderline and other countries; resource distribution among major programme areas by priority status of countries; and an analysis of the priority system by region. The Executive Director recommended replacing the criterion of the annual rate of population growth by that of the annual increment to population size. The Executive Director further recommended that the distinction between priority countries and borderline countries be eliminated. He also proposed some minor modifications in the criteria as well as the thresholds: a per capita gross national product (GNP) of $500 or less; an annual increment to total population of 100,000 or more persons; a gross reproduction rate of 2.5 or more; an infant mortality rate of 160 per 1,000 live births or more; and a density of agricultural population of 2.0 or more persons per hectare of arable land. In endorsing these modified criteria, the Council reiterated its view that UNFPA should make every effort to devote two thirds of country programme resources to priority countries. The application of these revised criteria resulted in a new list of 53 priority countries in 1982.

8. UNFPA undertook an interim review of this revised system of priority countries in 1986 (document DP/1986/38), as requested by the Governing Council at its thirtieth session (decision 83/17 I, para. 4). In addition to presenting an analysis of programme trends and a summary of the Fund's experience with using the criteria to determine priority status, the Executive Director proposed a set of programme guidelines to

---

[2] Annual rate of population growth of 2.75 per cent or higher; gross reproduction rate of 2.75 or more; infant mortality rate of 176 per 1,000 live births or more; and agricultural population density on arable land of 2.2 persons or more per hectare.

strengthen the system further. The Council took note of the report and recognized the need for flexibility on the part of the Executive Director in implementing programming guidelines.

9. The Governing Council in 1986 at its thirty-third session (decision 86/34 I, para. 5) requested the Executive Director to again examine the programming experience of the Fund in using the priority country system and to suggest modifications of the criteria, should he feel such modifications necessary. In response to this decision, the Executive Director proposed, and the Council endorsed, adding female literacy as a criterion. The Council also approved the Fund's recommendations for revised thresholds to reflect improvements in the areas measured by the indicators for developing countries as a whole. The Council in decision 88/34A, paragraph 4, endorsed the following criteria and thresholds: per capita GNP of $750 or under, gross reproduction rate of 2.0 or more, infant mortality rate of 120 or more, annual population increment of 100,000 or more, agricultural population density of 2.0 or more persons per hectare of arable land and female literacy rate of 40 per cent or under. Application of the revised criteria and threshold levels yielded 56 countries for priority assistance. The Council in the same decision (para. 6) raised the target for allocations to priority countries to 80 per cent of country programme resources, to be attained by 1994, and requested that UNFPA submit an interim report to the Council at its thirty-eighth session (1991) on the implementation of modified criteria. It also requested that the Fund submit a report to the Governing Council at its fortieth session (1993) reviewing the Fund's experience in implementing the modified criteria and reaching the 80 per cent target. The present report responds to that request.

III. THE EXPERIENCE OF UNFPA WITH THE SYSTEM OF PRIORITY COUNTRIES

10. Since the adoption in 1977 of the system of priority countries for population assistance a total of 78 countries have received priority assistance from UNFPA. As a result of the first revision of indicators and threshold levels in 1982, 19 of the original 54 priority and borderline countries "graduated" out of the priority list and an additional 18 countries qualified for priority assistance. The second revision of the priority country system in 1988 established a new set of 56 priority countries. Six countries "graduated" out of the list and nine countries were added, for a net addition of three countries. The merger of Democratic Yemen and the Arab Republic of Yemen in May 1990 reduced the number of UNFPA priority countries to 55. It is worth noting that three countries that had "graduated" out of the priority country system following the 1982 revision re-entered the UNFPA priority country list in 1988 due to worsening socio-economic conditions.

11. The roots of the Fund's priority system can be traced back to the World Population Conference of 1974 in Bucharest. The recommendations of the Bucharest Conference, adopted as the World Population Plan of Action, continue to provide a policy framework for the formulation, implementation and evaluation of population policies and programmes. The 1970 round of population censuses produced the first detailed description of the population situation in a large number of developing countries. At about the same time, the capacity of the United Nations system to deal with population activities was improving rapidly. The interaction of these developments gave rise to a rapid growth in demand for international population assistance that far exceeded the resources available. The system of priority countries, which UNFPA proposed in 1976 to the Governing Council, was thus designed as a way of concentrating the Fund's limited resources in those developing countries that had the most serious population problems and the most urgent need for assistance.

12. Since the start of the priority system in 1976/1977, the Fund has strengthened its programming activities and shifted its strategy from a project-oriented system to a comprehensive programme-oriented approach. The programme approach initially relied on needs assessment exercises, which enabled the Fund

to channel its assistance to countries in a systematic fashion, within the framework of the country's national population policy, programmatic interests, and needs for external assistance. By the end of 1987, the programmes in 50 of the 53 designated priority countries had benefited from such exercises. In 1989, UNFPA replaced the needs assessments exercise with Programme Review and Strategy Development (PRSD) exercises. The PRSD exercise culminates in the fielding of a strategy development mission, which works closely with the Government in developing a coherent and comprehensive framework for a national population strategy. The mission analyses the current status and needs, assesses achievements of past population activities and recommends future actions in terms of an overall national population strategy. By the end of 1992, a total of 59 PRSD exercises had been undertaken, 31 of them in priority countries.

13. The UNFPA experience with the system of priority countries is reviewed below. The Fund's experience during the interval between the initiation of the priority system in 1976/1977 and the end of 1987 when the last review took place is documented in report DP/1988/38. The years chosen for this analysis are 1983, 1988 and 1992, years when the list of priority countries changed.

General trends

14. As mandated by the Economic and Social Council (resolution 1763 (LIV) of 18 May 1973), the Fund is to extend systematic and sustained assistance to developing countries at their request. UNFPA's allocations to country programmes rose from $402 million in the 1983-1987 period to $561 million in the 1988-1992 period, an increase of 40 per cent. By contrast, the amount devoted to priority countries during the same period increased from $277 million to $411 million, a rise of 48 per cent. In relative terms, allocations to priority countries increased from 70 per cent of the total in 1983 to 75 per cent in 1992 (see table 1). The increase in the proportion allocated to priority countries has been due to the Fund's concerted efforts to concentrate its country programme resources in priority countries.

Table 1: Distribution of expenditure1/ by priority status of countries, 1983, 1988 and 1992 (per cent)

Priority Status	1983	1988	1992
Priority countries	70	72	75
Non-priority countries	30	28	25
All countries	100	100	100
Country programme expenditure (in millions)	$ 73.5	$ 89.9	$ 141.0

1/ Data for 1992 refer to allocations of combined funds (regular and multi-bilateral), while data for 1983 and 1988 refer to expenditures of regular funds.

15. Of the total amount of resources expended in country programmes and projects in 1992, 75 per cent went to priority countries. Although the Fund's target is to allocate 80 per cent of its country programme resources to priority countries, UNFPA's mandate remains to assist all developing countries requesting assistance. While the priority country system identifies those countries with the greatest need for assistance, many programmes in non-priority countries merit large-scale funding. In 1992 the Fund supported country programmes in eight non-priority countries in which each country was allocated in excess of $1 million. Five of these country programmes were in the Arab States and Europe region and three were in Latin America and Caribbean region.

Assistance to priority countries by region

16. The distribution of expenditures by region is given in table 2, while the number of priority countries in each region is shown in table 3. From 1988 to 1992, the composition of the priority countries in each region changed, with a net increase of three: four countries were added to the list (one each in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia and the Pacific and two in Latin America and the Caribbean) and one in the Arab States and Europe region "graduated" out of the list.

17. Although the system of priority countries is a global concept, there are regional differences in the distribution of expenditures by priority status of countries, as depicted in table 2. This is due primarily to the proportion of all countries in each region that have priority status. For example, in 1992, a large majority of countries in sub-Saharan Africa were priority countries, whereas only 5 of 39 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean were designated as priority.

18. It is evident from table 2 that the share of allocations within each region going to priority countries has increased (quite considerably in the case of Latin America and the Caribbean) or remained more or less constant, except for the Arab States and Europe, which decreased when a large country programme graduated from priority to non-priority status.

Table 2: Distribution of expenditure1/ for priority countries by region, 1983, 1988 and 1992 (per cent)

Region	1983	1988	1992
Sub-Saharan Africa	82	79	85
Asia and the Pacific	87	91	90
Latin America and the Caribbean	8	17	31
Arab States and Europe	41	56	30 2/

1/ Data for 1992 refer to allocations of combined funds (regular and multi-bilateral), while data for 1983 and 1988 refer to expenditures of regular funds.

2/ The decrease from 1988 to 1992 is due to the "graduation" out of priority status of one country that had a major UNFPA programme.

Non-quantitative aspects

19. While the quantitative information presented in this report are illustrative, there are other important aspects of UNFPA support to priority countries that are not easily discerned in financial data. For example, UNFPA has striven to strengthen its field infrastructure in priority countries. As a result, all but nine of the priority countries in sub-Saharan Africa now have field offices headed by resident Country Directors, while the remaining offices are staffed by National Programme Officers and necessary support staff.

20. The Fund has also been flexible in adapting its programmes in priority countries to take into account their low levels of institutional, material and human resource capabilities. UNFPA has thus provided longer-term support to priority countries for specialized training abroad for nationals at middle and senior management levels and for resident technical advisory services. The Fund has, moreover, helped to defray the costs for local programme personnel in priority countries, which has contributed to staff commitment and continuity for implementing population programmes. It has also extended assistance to priority countries to construct and rehabilitate service facilities, especially in cases where difficult economic circumstances have threatened the continued functioning of programmes.

IV. CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING PRIORITY STATUS OF COUNTRIES

21. The choice of criteria for designating priority countries is central to the priority country system. This question has been reviewed several times in the past in the submissions made by the Executive Director to the Governing Council (notably in reports DP/186, DP/232, DP/1982/30/add. 1, DP/1986/38 and DP/1988/38).

22. The criteria used should relate to the objective of the priority country system, namely, to provide priority assistance to countries with the most serious population problems and the most urgent needs for assistance. While one needs only to examine the indicators that measure the national standard of living and quality of life to determine the external assistance required, measuring the gravity of population problems is more complex. It is not simply a question of assembling a long list of specific population problems found in developing countries and tallying the results. Preference must be given to those problems that are crucial in a large number of countries, are measurable in the form of statistical indicators, and are reflective of activities covered by the UNFPA mandate. Before discussing the continued relevance of the present set of indicators, it may be useful to briefly outline the major aspects of population problems in developing countries.

General observations

23. The question of what is a serious population problem, while appearing straightforward, is actually a complex issue. One can easily define individual demographic situations and express them in quantitative terms. But instead of trying to devise an all-embracing, universal definition, it is useful to distinguish between actual demographic conditions themselves and their socio-economic manifestations. The most conventional approach, as embodied in the World Population Plan of Action, is to look at a country's basic demographic "framework", which is composed of population size and its growth, fertility and reproduction, mortality and morbidity, migration, urbanization and population distribution, and population composition and structure. While it is now well recognized that problems of population and development are interrelated and that population problems should therefore be addressed through an integrated approach, population problems are normally specified in terms of demographic conditions alone -- population size and growth, mortality, fertility, and migration.

24. Demographic conditions in developing countries can be viewed from either a global comparative or a national perspective. For instance, one can describe the population situation in individual countries

comparatively by analysing the data presented in the United Nations World Population Prospects: The 1992 Revision. On the other hand, one can examine the situation of individual countries as reflected in the regular and periodic inquiries conducted by the United Nations among member states. Such inquiries elicit national perceptions of and policies towards a wide range of population issues, including, specifically, population growth, mortality, fertility, urbanization and population distribution, and international migration. Both perspectives are briefly reviewed below.

Comparative perspective

25. Demographically, the developing countries make up a heterogeneous group of countries. Wide variations exist within and between regions of the world. For example, the rate of population growth ranges widely. Among the developing regions, it is the highest in Africa at 2.93 per cent, followed by Latin America at 1.79 per cent and Asia at 1.78 per cent. There are currently some 73 developing countries and territories with population growth rates exceeding 2.5 per cent.

26. One of the main reasons for the continued high rates of population growth in many developing countries is the persistence of relatively high fertility despite sharp declines in mortality rates. The total number of children born per woman, as expressed by the total fertility rate (TFR), averages 1.9 in developed countries and 3.6 in developing regions. The average TFR in Africa stands at 6.0, followed by 3.2 in Asia, and 3.1 in Latin America. There are currently at least 58 developing countries with total fertility rates exceeding 5 children per woman.

27. Although mortality rates have fallen dramatically in the developing world, significant differences between regions persist. Life expectancy at birth in developed countries is now close to 75 years. Life expectancy in developing countries is considerably lower at about 62 years. It is lowest in Africa at 53 years, followed by Asia at 65 years and Latin America at 68 years. There are 39 developing countries with a life expectancy at birth of 55 years or lower.

28. The lower levels of life expectancy in developing countries are largely the result of high levels of infant and child mortality. The disparities in mortality of infants across countries and regions are indeed wide. For instance, the infant mortality rate in developed countries is 12 per 1,000 live births, while in developing countries it is 69. Similarly, the average infant mortality rate in Africa is 95, followed by Asia at 62 and Latin America at 47 per 1,000 live births.

National perspective

29. The most recent information on national perceptions of population concerns and national policies and programmes is available in the United Nations World Population Monitoring 1991 report, which primarily draws from the United Nations Sixth Population Inquiry. According to the findings of this inquiry, 53 per cent of the developing countries viewed their rate of population growth as too high. The 69 developing countries that considered their growth rates as too high in 1990 accounted for approximately 85 per cent of the people residing in the developing regions. By contrast, 17 developing countries believed that their growth rates were too low; however, because of their relatively small sizes, they accounted for only 3 per cent of the population of the developing world. Similarly, 74 developing countries viewed their levels of fertility as too high; 64 of these countries had programmes designed to lower fertility rates.

30. Fully 78 per cent of the developing countries considered their levels of mortality to be unacceptably high. In this regard, developing countries are most concerned about high rates of infant and child mortality. To help reduce these high rates, many countries have, inter alia, integrated family planning information and

services into their maternal and child health (MCH) programmes and strengthened other essential components of MCH programmes. Developing countries also expressed concern about the spatial distribution of their populations and about internal migration. Of the 131 developing countries surveyed, 113 considered their current patterns of population distribution as problematic. Furthermore, 94 countries also indicated that they would like to decelerate or reverse the current trends in internal migration.

31. The causes and consequences of these demographic conditions are many and complex. Demographic factors influence socio-economic trends just as such factors affect demographic behaviour. Given this complexity, the selection of criteria to identify the most serious population problems should include aspects of population size and growth, mortality, migration and urbanization. Moreover, each of the criteria selected should satisfy four considerations in order to facilitate international comparisons: (a) the criterion should be objectively measurable; (b) it should have a uniform meaning and definition; (c) data should be generally available for all developing countries from sources recognized internationally; and (d) all data should be recent and available for all countries for the same period.

Experience with current criteria

32. Since the formulation and adoption of the system of priority countries in 1976/1977, the Fund has, with the approval of the Governing Council, used GNP per capita as its initial screening indicator to determine eligibility of individual countries for priority assistance. Those countries that met the GNP requirement were further screened to see if they met at least two of the requisite demographic criteria. Those countries meeting both the GNP and demographic requirements were then designated as priority countries.

33. UNFPA recognizes that GNP per capita is far from being a perfect measure of the quality of life in a country and that it suffers from a number of conceptual inadequacies. It remains, however, the only composite index of national income that is uniformly available for almost all developing countries.

34. The degree of agricultural population density on arable land is an important indicator due to the continued preponderance of agriculture as a way of economic life in the developing world. The agricultural population density is thus a useful indicator of the link between population and development in many developing countries. Mounting population pressures on arable land seriously affect the capacity of the agricultural sector to absorb the rural labour force and thus adversely influence development potential and fuel rural-to-urban migration, making the need for rural fertility decline assume even greater importance.

35. Given UNFPA's mandate, the priority system should include at least one indicator reflecting the level of fertility in developing countries. While there are a large number of indicators that could be used, the Fund selected gross reproduction rate because it is an indicator that is free from variations in the age composition of populations.

36. The annual increment to total population in a country is an important indicator, encompassing both population size and the annual rate of population growth. Moreover, absolute increments of population in and of themselves constitute population problems in a large number of developing countries since they add considerably to the demand for social, economic and other infrastructural services. It also is an ultimate indicator of the success or failure of population programmes.

37. The infant mortality rate is an important indicator for several reasons. First, it is a tragic human problem in developing countries; second, high infant mortality is a partial determinant of fertility; and third, it contributes disproportionately to the determination of total life expectancy. The Amsterdam Declaration of 1989 stresses the role that the reduction of the infant mortality rate has for furthering social development.

38. It is firmly established that improving the role, status and participation of women in social, economic and political processes will accelerate the process of socio-economic development and demographic change. Various studies have emphasized the role of female literacy in child-bearing, child spacing, health practices, contraception, mobility, and employment patterns, among others. The female literacy rate is an effective proxy indicator for differentiating the status of women among developing countries and assessing the extent to which illiteracy may be a constraint to implementing population and development programmes. While the availability of high-quality data on female literacy has generally been limited, however, such data have become increasingly available since the Governing Council endorsed, in 1988, its inclusion as a criterion in determining priority country status.

Revision of criteria and thresholds

39. In view of the foregoing discussion, the continued use of the existing demographic and literacy criteria, together with GNP per capita as a screening variable, appear justified and thus remain the most suitable criteria to determine priority countries for UNFPA assistance.

40. When the system of priority countries was established, it was the intention of UNFPA to review and revise, at periodic intervals, both the existing criteria and their threshold levels. It was further recognized that as economic and demographic situations changed, it would be necessary to revise the thresholds of indicators to reflect these changes. The practice, since the adoption of the priority country system, has been to review the system once every five or six years and make adjustments accordingly. The first such review and revision took place in 1982, the second in 1988. The present, updating of the list of priority countries is the third.

41. While there have been some improvements in the indicators for developing countries as a whole, the Fund recommends that the present threshold levels be maintained. At present, these thresholds are the following: an infant mortality rate of 120 or more per 1,000 live births; a gross reproduction rate of 2.0 or more; an annual increment of 100,000 or more to total population; a female literacy rate of 40 per cent or under; and a density of agricultural population on arable land of 2.0 or more persons per hectare. Analysis conducted by the Fund indicates that in order to continue assisting countries in demographic transition on a priority basis, it is necessary to maintain the thresholds at the levels endorsed by the Governing Council in 1988.

42. Various alternative procedures for revision of the criteria for priority status were explored. However, no viable alternative to the present method was found that would better meet the requirements for a priority country system as described earlier. The recent past has witnessed many instances of declines in GNP per capita and in other social and economic indicators. Further, adjustments in the threshold levels would seriously jeopardize the priority assistance given to several countries that had made some progress towards a fertility transition. Continued priority assistance to these countries is necessary for a few more years to help them consolidate the gains achieved to date. It should also be noted that the present criteria and thresholds encompass a large majority of countries designated as least developed countries (LDCs).

43. In view of the above, and in order to maintain harmony with the GNP per capita level used for UNDP allocation of country IPFs in its fifth programming cycle (see document DP/1991/24), UNFPA recommends that $750 be maintained as the threshold for the GNP per capita screening variable.

44. The analysis conducted by the Fund during the course of this review suggests that the priority list should be adjusted at more frequent intervals than approximately once in every five years. In view of fluctuating GNP per capita figures, it may be necessary to revise the list of priority countries at more frequent

intervals, at which time all the latest demographic and literacy data will be reviewed and appropriate adjustments made to the priority country list.

Programme strategies

45. UNFPA continues to emphasize, among other issues, the need to streamline procedures to make resources available quickly and effectively to individual countries; the importance of strategic planning in the population sector in developing countries; and the crucial role of technical assistance. It is useful to briefly describe here the policy, procedural and programmatic changes that the Fund has introduced to the priority country system to strengthen the capacity of recipient countries in general and priority countries in particular.

46. The Fund continues to further decentralize approval authority to the field. This helps to cut the inherent delays in administrative processing and project approval as well as give a greater role to field offices in determining the substantive content of programme activities. It also facilitates programme formulation and implementation in many priority countries.

47. Similarly, the recently introduced PRSD exercises seek to introduce a strategic approach to population programming by developing a conceptual and programmatic framework to guide population activities in a country. The framework will help developing countries to coordinate activities between sectors, among implementing agencies and between donors, as well as to achieve synergistic impact from implementing population and related development activities in individual countries. As noted above, 31 priority countries have already benefited from these exercises.

48. The Fund also introduced a new Technical Support Services (TSS) arrangement to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of technical assistance in meeting the growing needs of developing countries in the field of population. It established eight Country Support Teams (CSTs) in the four geographic regions: three in sub-Saharan Africa, based in Addis Ababa, Harare and Dakar; three in the Asia and Pacific region, based in Bangkok, Kathmandu and Suva; one in Santiago in the Latin America and the Caribbean region; and one in Amman in the Arab States and Europe region. The thirty-eighth session of the Governing Council considered and endorsed the proposed arrangements, as presented in document DP/1991/35, to enhance the Fund's ability to make available effective support, both technical and substantive, to population programmes in recipient countries. The new arrangement will greatly benefit priority countries as it provides for a flexible and differentiated response to the unique needs of these countries. At little or no cost to the recipient countries, these Country Support Teams will be able to provide multi-disciplinary technical advice within the framework of a comprehensive programme approach.

49. While these innovative approaches are designed to assist all recipient countries, the changes will particularly enhance the Fund's assistance to priority countries.

50. Priority countries consist of low-income developing countries that require special attention. The absorptive capacity of many of these countries is quite limited. It is necessary, therefore, to strengthen their institutional base, develop their human resources, increase their national financial contributions to population activities and intensify the commitment of their staff. Thus, an important concern in the context of priority countries is not just the magnitude of support, but also the type of assistance. It is imperative that UNFPA continue to be flexible in meeting national needs as perceived by the countries themselves and devote more staff time and attention accordingly. The Fund must also continue to provide assistance to cover salaries of local personnel, allowing priority countries time to take over this responsibility. Similarly, the Fund needs to be flexible in supporting a range of inputs necessary for institution building.

V. IMPLICATIONS OF MAINTAINING THE PRESENT CRITERIA

51. In view of the foregoing discussion and based on the latest data[3] on economic, demographic and literacy criteria, the Fund proposes that the current criteria and thresholds for priority country status be maintained. That is, priority country status should be determined by satisfying the GNP per capita criterion of $750 or less and any two of the following criteria and threshold levels:

- Annual increment of 100,000 or more to total population;
- Gross reproduction rate of 2.0 or more;
- Infant mortality rate of 120 per 1,000 live births or more;
- Density of agricultural population on arable land of 2.0 persons or more per hectare;
- Female literacy rate of 40 per cent or less.

Table 3: Regional distribution of countries by priority status
1983, 1988 and 1992
(number of countries)

Region	1983		1988		1992	
	Priority	Non-priority	Priority	Non-priority	Priority	Non-priority
Sub-Saharan Africa	30	13	31	12	32	11
Asia and the Pacific	16	22	16	22	17	21
Latin America and the Caribbean	2	37	3	36	5	34
Arab States and Europe	5	26	5	25	4	26
Total:	53	98	55	95	58	92

52. If these criteria are maintained, 58 countries would qualify for priority assistance. Of these 58 priority countries, 50 satisfy the fertility criterion; 49 the agricultural population density criterion; 47 the criterion of annual increments to population; 34 the female literacy criterion; and 16 the infant mortality rate criterion.

---

[3] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Development, World Population Prospects: The 1992 Revision (United Nations publication, advance copy); United Nations Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, World Population Monitoring 1991, (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.92.XIII.2); United Nations Development Programme, Preparations for the Fifth Programme Cycle, including funding strategy, DP/1991/24, and Matters relating to the fourth and fifth programming cycles, DP/1992/22; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1992 UNESCO Statistical Yearbook, advance copy, December 1992; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Worldwide estimates and projections of the agricultural and non-agricultural population segments 1950-2025, unpublished latest data.

53. Of the 58 countries, 32 are in sub-Saharan Africa, 17 are in Asia and the Pacific, five in Latin America and the Caribbean, and four in the Arab States and Europe (see table 3). In 1992, the combined population of these countries constituted about 79 per cent of the total for all developing countries. They also accounted for some 75 per cent of the Fund's total allocations for country programmes in that year (see table 1). Moreover, 39 of these countries are also designated as least developed countries (LDCs) by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The three countries classified by the General Assembly as "as if LDCs" would also be classified as UNFPA priority countries. The new list of priority countries would include 50 of the present 55 priority countries. Of the five countries that no longer qualify as priority countries, four had a per capita GNP higher than $750.

54. Maintaining the present criteria and thresholds, together with the proposal to update the list of priority countries more frequently, would allow the Executive Director the necessary flexibility to respond to changing economic and demographic situations. It would also enable UNFPA to concentrate the Fund's resources in countries with the most critical needs, which is, of course, the primary purpose of the priority country system. Therefore, it is important that UNFPA be able to respond quickly and effectively to countries with emerging critical needs.

V. RECOMMENDATION

55. The Executive Director recommends that the Governing Council:

(a) Take note of the present report;

(b) Endorse existing criteria and their thresholds;

(c) Take note of the most recent updating of the list of priority countries; and

(d) Request the Executive Director to report to the Governing Council at appropriate intervals on further progress made in implementing the guidelines.

- - - - -